

Where To Receive Education and Training

Currently, the education to become a direct care professional can be obtained in a number of locations and the hours required may vary depending upon where you work:

Community Colleges: Iowa's 15 Community Colleges often work in partnership with local Direct Care Professional employers in their region to provide both classroom instruction and clinical practice at local hospitals, nursing homes, and similar care and support settings. To find the community college nearest you go to:
<http://www.iacct.com/Pages/colleges.aspx>

Hospitals: Some Iowa hospitals offer Direct Care Professional programs through the hospital and others partner with local state universities, private colleges, community colleges, and others.

High Schools: Some high schools offer Direct Care Professional programs for Certified Nursing Assistants with credits that will transfer to a community college or university.

Employers: Some employers provide education for the Direct Care Professionals they employ.

Education may be available in a number of formats ranging from classroom, online, on the job, or a combination of all.

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DIRECT CARE PROFESSION



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Consider A Career In Caring

Those entering the direct care profession may be considering:

- Starting a Career Pathway
- Entering the Field as First Time Employment
- Changing Careers
- More Rewarding Work
- Returning to the Workforce

Direct Care May Be For You

While direct care is not for everyone...many who have chosen the field say it is "The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love." Becoming a Direct Care Professional may be for you if you can answer yes to these questions:

- Do you enjoy making a positive difference in someone's life?
- Do you seek a career with a meaningful purpose?
- Does it bring you satisfaction to support others to be more independent?
- Do you like a challenge?
- Do you like to be "kept on your toes"?
- Do you enjoy being busy?
- Do you enjoy building meaningful connections with others?

Direct Care As An Occupation

Direct Care Professionals are the largest occupational group in Iowa. As a profession in high demand, ongoing efforts are being made to provide even more opportunities for advancement. They are also high demand jobs and new efforts are helping to provide more opportunities for advancement within the field. The demand for these jobs is growing due to an increase in our aging population and persons with disabilities and their desire for more in-home care and support options.

Direct Care Employment Opportunities

- Homes of consumers or clients
- Group Homes
- Adult Day Centers
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Residential Facilities
- Hospitals
- Nursing Homes
- Nonmedical Senior Service Agencies
- Hospices

Who Direct Care Professionals Serve

Direct care professionals serve as vital partners in caring with the families of those served:

- Children and adults with disabilities from birth or injury
- Aging adults no longer able to care for themselves
- Individuals with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia
- Those recovering from short term illness or surgery
- Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, head trauma, and other injuries
- Individuals during the end of life

What Direct Care Professionals Do

Direct Care Professionals provide most of the direct hands on care and support for Iowans of all ages and in all settings. Those responsibilities, depending upon what area you are working in, may include:

Assisting with activities of daily living such as:

- Eating
- Dressing
- Bathing
- Walking
- Rehabilitation and exercising
- Cooking
- Job and independent living coaching
- Using the toilet
- Monitoring medications and blood sugars
- Monitoring vital signs such as blood pressure, pulse, temperature
- Monitoring wound care
- Supporting those with challenging behaviors
- Transporting (wheelchair, van, etc.)

Direct Care Professional Titles

Job titles are often linked to the place of employment or type of care or support setting:

- Home Care or Health Aides
- Consumer Directed Attendant Care Worker
- Direct Support Professional
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Rehabilitation or Restorative Aide
- Hospice Aide
- Medication Aide
- Behavior Specialist
- Patient Care Technician
- Universal Worker
- Adult Day Service Worker

**I can't imagine
our lives
without direct
care workers.**

— Jim Pender Family

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